The inhabitants of the Lower Chambal basin allege that it is the quality of the Chambal water that produces the rebels. This view seems valid in the sense that since the remote past there have been no major social, economic, or religious changes and this land has remained isolated from the outside world. The physical and social environment of the Chambal provided a good ground for the criminal activities of the anti-social elements like the dacoits.

The dacoit-gangs come into being in different ways. A few persons after committing murders for petty reasons do not want to face any trial but take shelter in the ravines. They join the fraternity of a few other murderers and form a small gang. Sometimes they join the nucleus of the existing gangs, and start committing fresh murders, kidnappings for ransom and dacoities and become confirmed criminals.

It is very difficult to find out the actual number of criminals of the Lower Chambal basin. However, it is said that roughly 10% of the total population consists of criminals and harbourers. It is a significant number and establishes dacoity as a sort of rebellion against the existing social order. In this context Verrier (1961) asserts, "The Santal rebellion in 1855 is said to have been excited by economic loss caused by grasping and rapacious money-lenders and a system which permitted personal and
hereditary bondage for debt, the unparalleled corruption and extortion of the police; the impossibility of the Santals obtaining redress from the courts; the ignorance of tribal custom and indifference to tribal needs on the part of the administrators of the day; and the expropriation of Santal land. The Koya rebellion in East Godavari in 1879 has been traced to the behaviour of the police."

In the words of Sir Cecil Walsh (1929, pp. 10-11), "A very large proportion of the cases of violence in northern India arises out of hot blood, ungovernable temper and the natural inclination of the villager, who is generally miles away from any police, to take the law into his own hands and to fight out his quarrel on the spot. Whether the cause be their lack of education, the narrowness of their religion, the climate, or as I have often thought, their lack of association with men of attainments superior to their own, the fact is that they fail to use their intelligence, and upon slight provocation lose all power of reasoning and self control. Whether it is a question of cattle trespass, irrigation, family enmity, an old personal grudge, a sexual difficulty, or some quite trivial dispute, the average cultivator will break-out at once into abuse, often of the most disgusting character, which develops rapidly into a fight, in which the relations and friends on either side will join in substantial numbers if they happen to be near. If one disputant, finding himself seriously outnumbered, a disadvantage which the villager invariably hopes to impose upon his enemy, should discreetly retire, the fight will take place later on, more or less in cold blood, when both sides are ready. It is
impossible to regard these criminals in the ordinary significance of that term—"They want speedy justice; they are great believers in getting in the first blow, and, to tell the truth, few of them have learned anything else. And they know that they are pretty certain to get it if they don't give it." This view of Sir Cecil Walsh provides a vivid picture of the crime of the Lower Chambal basin.

The Bhind Morena Crime Situation Enquiry Committee, under the Chairmanship of Shri Ram Krishna Dixit, comes to the same conclusion, (unpublished) "The pressure on land and hard economic conditions are bound to have comparatively more serious repercussions in an area where tempers are readily frayed and armed gangs offer opportunities to adventurous spirits, who do not have much of a stake in peaceful existence. The economic malaise has been aggravated by the abolition of Zamindari. This economic reform has no doubt given security of tenure to and strengthened the position of the small men, specially the sub-tenants who were drawn from the lower classes. But many petty proprietors have been deprived of small benefits and the incorporeal sense of prestige derived from proprietary rights. They do not see any compensating advantage flowing from the change and have not been able to reconcile themselves readily to the change in land tenure. Moreover, even though the large body of petty landholders had little to lose by the abolition of proprietary interests in land, emotionally they felt themselves aligned with the big land holder who has had much to lose and who often governs their opinions. The assertion of social equality by the Harijans and the inconvenience caused by them by giving up some of their traditional
occupations in the village life has added fuel to fire. Elections have further widened the social schism. In this atmosphere the dacoits found a fruitful field of new endeavour. They found in powerful sections of the community, if not active support, at least passive sympathy for organised violence and pillage of Harijans. This has had disastrous results in an area where social attitudes towards crime were already indifferent." Thus the Committee viewed dacoity as a socio-economic problem.

Shri M. Radhakrishnan (1957 a, p.3) remarks, "If the people living in these parts take to banditry as a profitable profession, it is because the high, deep and, bushy ravines and the thick jungles make it seem easy and tempting to them." Panikkar observes, (1955), "This was at all times an area of refuge, the geographical conditions of which enabled communities displaced by invasions to take shelter and carry on their life unmolested by the people of the Gangetic Valley. The Minas, the Bhils and other indigenous tribes first took shelter here. In more recent times when the Muslims occupied the Gangetic valley, it is to this inhospitable area that the Rajputs withdrew and carved out new states." Tracing the history of dacoity of this area, Radhakrishnan (1957 a, pp.34) says, "Most of the dacoits in these areas belong to the Tomar Rajput clan, which used to rule Delhi once. When they were driven away by Prithvi Raj in the 12th century, they retreated southwards and occupied the Chambal area. They continued to rebel against the Delhi rulers but with no success. With the passage of time, the spirit of revolt died but in its place grew love for banditry born of refusal to submit to the Delhi regime."
"The people of this area are mostly poor, their occupation being agriculture. Owing to the fragmentation of land, which has been going on for a long time, the average per capita land holding is very low.

The soil is poor and irrigation facilities inconsiderable. There is no other trade or industry and consequently the pressure of the people on land is heavy. Bag-ridden by poverty and crushed by their burdens, some of them take to illegal ways of earning money, such as theft, disposal of stolen property, cattle lifting and so on. Persons who by day seem mere drawers of water and hewers of wood, by night become desperate criminals." Thus, all the views expressed above, if combined together give a vivid picture of the factors of crime in general.

After a careful consideration of the viewpoints of the various interviewees the following factors affecting dacoity were sorted out. These are disputes over land, party factions, tendency to take revenge, misbehaviour of the police, assault on the chastity of the females, want of justice, the martial traditions, the home environment including the background of poverty, family's illegal occupations, wrong association, and emotional factors including imitation, evil desire to gain by illegal means, and lack of training in group-ideals. It is worth mentioning that a person turns a dacoit due to many factors, although only one of them may predominate at a time.

1. **DISPUTES OVER LAND**

A large number of cases of violence often arise out of
disputes over land. Enmity is created and quarrels often take place which result in murders. In this connection Verrier (1950) observes, "Murders connected with property are not generally committed for gain in the ordinary sense. They rather arise out of disputes about rights and privileges, and the actual murder is the result of anger and resentment, rather than a desire for possession. In several cases indeed murder has been a form of self-defence against someone who tries to take away land or other property that the murderer believes to be his by right." Practically every murderer absconds to escape from the clutches of law and finds shelter in the ravines and starts committing robberies and dacoities for his existence. Thus, the disputes over land are at least indirectly responsible for creating dacoits.

Usually, quarrels over land arise as a sequel to illegal possession. The trouble starts when a stronger person or party illegally possesses the land of the weaker person or party. In most cases, the latter tries to settle the dispute locally and amicably but unfortunately does not succeed. It creates factions and fights. In these, murders take place accidentally and in a fit of anger and resentment. Thus, Case no. 1, being deprived of his 32 Bighas of land forcibly took possession of his own land. For this he was arrested but later on the case was amicably settled. However, his opponent implicated him in the theft of a Mauser. As a result he committed the murder of his opponent, absconded and turned a dacoit. Details of the case indicate that he was willing to settle the matter peacefully but was forced by circumstances to resort to this.
Another case may here be mentioned. Case no. 11 lost some of his land due to 'R' who further got him implicated in certain offences. When case no. 11 tried to persuade 'R', a fight ensued. As a result to case No. 11, with the help of others killed two sons of 'R' and absconded. Many such cases can be cited to illustrate that land disputes lead people to fights, murders and later dacoities.

Case No. 32,

One of the biggest dacoits of the Chambal basin, also was a victim of land disputes arising out of party faction and resorted to murder. While on trial, he jumped bail, absconded and turned a dacoit. Case no. 9 is also another example.

Disputes often arise over the partition of land. A stronger person tries to occupy a better piece of land or he tries to acquire a little more than the other. The dispute takes the form of a quarrel. Both of them develop a sort of hostile and revengeful attitude. Ultimately, the stronger man tries to drag the weaker man into awful circumstances and disputes arise in which murders are common.

Thus Case no. 22, originally a school teacher, had a dispute with his cousin on partition. In the quarrel that ensued his younger brother was killed. The prosecution could not succeed as he could not get witnesses. Not being satisfied with this, he committed the murder of his cousin's sons and absconded. Others implicated with him surrendered and were acquitted and he turned a dacoit.

Similarly Case no. 5 had a quarrel with one member of his
family over the partition of land. On instigation by others that he was implicated by the member in a case of theft, he tried to kill him but failed. Though this was mutually settled, he tried again and killed him, later turning a dacoit.

2. PARTY Factions:

The party feuds of villages not only create dacoits but aid the gangs in committing dacoities and kidnappings. In the words of Nathur (1961), "These feuds and rivalries very often prompt one of the parties to hire a gang and get dacoity committed in the house of the opponent." According to a Sarpanch, "Generally, there are two parties in every village and every party tries to contact the gangs and oppress the other party." Case no. 17 was also of the view that, "The village feuds create two parties. The party of the rich persons either takes illegal possession of a piece of land belonging to the members of the other party, or implicate them in some offences truly or falsely and harass them in several ways. The members of the other party either sell out the disputed property or harbour the gangs. Sometimes, a rich party tries to kill the members of the other party."

"They plan to commit murders in such a way that, if at all arrested, they are all eventually acquitted by the courts. The second party, finding no way out, takes law in its own hands and kills the members of the rich party and absconds."

Thus almost every village is divided into party factions. These factions arise out of trivial matters of self-interests and the widening of such interests creates enmity. People of this area develop a sort of vendetta and try to wreak vengeance on their
enemy. They take law in their own hands and abscond either on committing murders or in order to commit murders later on. For example, the gang of case no. 7 was born out of animosity between the two Thakur parties of village "N".

These two parties pulled on well for some time but later there was a quarrel and the two parties disintegrated. Case no. 7 was betrayed by a member of the other party in a theft case. Moreover his brother was implicated in a case of dacoity. As a consequence he joined the dacoit gang and later became a notorious dacoit.

Now-a-days, every village has been divided into factions due to enmity that has been bred by the Gram Panchayat elections. Generally, two stronger persons of the village contest the election and form two hostile camps in the village. The losing party develops enmity against the winning-party. The enmity grows on till a fight breaks out in which murders take place and many persons abscond. Thus at village "Pip" the old Sarpanch "X" lost the election to "Y". The party of "X" was seeking an opportunity to fulfill their revengeful purpose. Both the parties assembled to celebrate the Holi festival. The Baniaas of the village were asked by "X" to distribute "gur" freely, as was customary. "Y" opposed it and said that all the villagers should contribute "chanda" for the "gur" distribution. "X" and "Y" exchanged hot words and a fight broke out in which a boy was severely injured and later on expired in the hospital. Twenty-nine members of the party of "X" absconded. They were likely to form a gang, if the matter did not subside.

Sometimes, village factions arise out of victimisation
by a stronger party. The major caste-group of the village inflicts several injustices on the minor caste-group. It creates enmity which grows on with the increasing harassments. The injustices take the form of encroachment upon grazing of the standing crops, teasing and insulting the female-folk and involving innocent persons in false cases. The minor castegroup tries to avoid the quarrel in the beginning, but when its patience exhausts, a serious fight breaks-out. In the fight, sometimes, murders also take place and the culprits abscond to escape from the clutches of law. Thus, cases No. 2 and 3 turned outlaws due to victimisation by case No.23.

The haves like the ex-zamindars, big land holders and other rich persons of the villages want to continue their mal-practices by exploiting the haves-nots. A sort of awakening has appeared in the haves-not who now refuse to surrender to the haves. It offends the haves, who in collaboration with other stronger party try to oppress the poor peasantry. It creates a revengeful attitude between the two sections of the village society. Fights often spread-up and the have-nots abscond due to the upper hand of the haves. Thus, a big land-holder "X" of village "H", tried to oppress the Gujars of his village because they refused to offer their services to him. He tried to exert the police pressure. The Gujars counter-acted this move. One day, when he tried with his party to suppress them, hot words were exchanged and a fight ensued. Four Gujars absconded and joined the gang of case no. 32.

3. TENDENCY TO TAKE REVENGE:

The tendency to take revenge is very strong in the people
of the Lower Chambal Basin. The Thakurs who came from the ruling class comprise a large part of the population. They are taught to die rather than bear an insult. Any attack on their "self-respect" takes a bad turn. A quarrel atonce takes place if anybody opposes them. They are so sensitive that if some one does not pay them due regards or shows any arrogance, they take it as a challenge to their dignity. They turn violent in ordinary brands and commit murders. Rustamji (1961, p.2) quotes, "Tempers are easily frayed. Murder by way of private vengeance is a part of the rules of the game without any sense of sin." Traditions have also played an important role in shaping the revengeful nature of the people. Dizit and Rustamji (Private Communication), "What to say of the Rajputs, all the communities, Brahman, Thakurs, Harijans, Vaisyas, were born and brought up in the healthy climate of this region, and they imbibed the dauntless spirit and martial traditions of the Rajputs. In the event of any dispute the matter was never taken to a court of Law for decision but on the contrary people took the law into their own hands and decided matters themselves at the point of the gun or by the edge of the sword." Hervey (p. 14) observes, "Revenge is answerable for many murders in India. If a man informs against another, and gets this other into trouble or pecuniary loss, the lex talionis is almost sure to follow."

This revengeful spirit is much stronger in the ladies. They instigate their husbands and sons to take revenge and kill the enemy. Case no. 21 was instigated by his mother to avenge his father's imprisonment for fourteen years in a dacoity case, and his death within the four-walls of the prison. Case no. 21 was ordered
by his mother at the time of the burial of her enemy "CH" to kill all his enemies. He could not kill them but on the third day he was able to chop off the nose of one of his enemies. He absconded along with his brother and paid the debt of the family by killing his enemies.

People turn violent on trivial matters by making them their prestige issues. According to Walsh (1929, 153), "In the ordinary fight, which invariably follows the preliminary abuse arising out of some trivial and temporary dispute, beating and bruising, indicating triumph and momentary superiority, generally satisfy the victor. But long-nursed animosity and calculated vengeance demand something more in the nature of a permanent injury and mark, to be exhibited to the public gaze and to be remembered for all time." They take revenge by committing mass dacoities in which the whole village is ransacked. Thus, some of the relatives of case no. 10 were coming to his village. Some Kachhis of a nearby village looted them on their way. When case no. 10 came to know about it, he collected all his party-members and attacked the Kachhis and ransacked the whole village. His party looted 50 houses and took away all the property of the village. The Police tried its level best to check such mass dacoities but could not help, as the party of case no. 10 could not be punished. Only a general fine was imposed on them as a punishment.

Small matters like cattle-trespass take a bad turn. For example in 1959-60 some cattle of case no. 12 entered the field of "KS" and harmed his standing crops. "KS" along with his brother "AN" attacked case no. 12 in the Khaliihan and beat him. Case no. 12
developed enmity and decided to take revenge. His associate case no. 11 also had an enmity with the Patel "R" of his village. They decided to kill their enemies. One day they organised a riot and killed three persons, two sons of the Patel "R" and "KS", and absconded. Case no. 11 surrendered to the police after two years. But case no. 12 joined the gang of case no. 32.

Man Singh became a dacoit on the mere pretext of avenging his honour against Talfiram Brahmin, who got him implicated in a dacoity case, due to jealousy. He was provoked into wreaking vengeance and a bloody fight ensued, in which he was imprisoned for eleven years. In the mean time, Jaswat Singh and Dashrath Singh, eldest sons of Man Singh and Nawab Singh respectively, who were at large, were shot dead in an encounter. Soon after his release, he murdered two Rajputs of his village, whom he suspected to have been responsible for his sons death. He then avenged his enemies systematically and after the murder of Talfiram, escaped to the ravines along with his remaining sons and embarked upon a career of organised crime.

People are so vain that even insignificant matters hurt their pride and they crave revenge by committing dacoity with murder. According to Edwards (1924, p. 155), "The system of private warfare, or the bloody-feud, or the spirit of vindictive retaliation, as the case may be, still forms the basis of much of the crime committed in India." For example, "K" a Dhobi of village "Raj" slapped a nephew of case no. 16 because he grazed his cattle in the field of "K". This was treated as a great insult. Case no. 16 prepared a floating gang, and attacked the families of the Dhobies looted and tortured them and insulted the females. Thus the revenge was taken.

'Blood for blood' still rules the mind of the people and a person will not hesitate to sacrifice even his life in his attempts
to avenge his brothers or other relations. Thus murders multiply. The story of case no. 24 is a glaring example of how a brother turned into a dacoit after killing a police-informer. He was the younger brother of case no. 4. He won the favour of a Police Officer "BS" as he supplied precise information against the gang of case no. 3. There was another police-informer "CS" of village "NP", who supplied information against case no. 4 and helped the Police in arranging a raid against him. Case no. 24, out of love for his brother thought of taking revenge on "CS". One day 'BS' took case no. 24 in his confidence and asked him to kill case no. 4 and earn a heavy reward. Case no. 24 pretended loyalty to 'BS' and told him that he would kill his brother if he got a rifle. 'BS' was pleased with this and gave him a rifle on a promise from him to kill his brother within a fortnight. He killed 'CS' and absconded with the police-rifle joining his brother later on. Thus, he eliminated the possible danger to his brother by killing "CS".

The vendetta, which plays so important a part in the society of the Lower Chambal Basin, is developed through petty causes. It generally ends with revenge, which takes the form of seizure of the land, reducing the families of the opponents to beggary and at times eliminating the whole families by killing them. Dacoities, kidnappings and murders are committed to satisfy this spirit of revenge. The Bhind-Morena Crime Situation Committee (unpublished) reports, "Murder by way of private vengeance is a part of the rules of the game without any sense of sin. Kidnapping for ransom serves the twin ends of revenge and a larger profit."
4. MISBEHAVIOUR OF THE POLICE

Of the numerous allegations against the police made by a number of people interviewed, some were found to be based on certain instances. These are referred to below. However, it should be pointed out here that the blame may not be with the police as a force but with the individual who was a policyman at that time. Misbehaviour of the police has comparatively more serious repercussions in the Lower Chambal Basin, where tempers are readily frayed, and people take the law into their own hands and decide matters themselves at the point of the gun or by the edge of the sword. This particular trait of their nature has been instrumental in forcing them to banditti on the slightest pretext of misbehaviour of the police.

The Police, in trying to obtain information regarding the dacoits and their movements sometimes misbehaves with people in various ways. An officer (Private Communication) remarks on the effect of such behaviour on a person. "He is very often cruelly beaten for obvious reasons in the name of getting information of the gangs, and their activities. Naturally he is afraid of the Police treatment." A person having delicate feelings or an association with the gang, retaliates such treatment by joining a gang. Case no. 31, a boy of seventeen belonged to the family of cases no. 2 and 5. One day, when he was on his way from village Khandoli to "NG", he met a police party. The Police beat him mercilessly thinking that he might be coming from the gang and asked him to accompany them. He was so frightened with the maltreatment of the police, that he pretended to make water and slipped away into the
nearby raubins and joined the gang in spite of great opposition of cases no. 2 and 3.

Irrational behaviour of the Police also leads persons to banditti. For example, it is alleged that case no. 6 was ill treated and harassed by the police for harbouring his brother, case no. 7. The latter used to visit his house in spite of the heavy police pressure and warning but the former was helpless because of his blood relation. The police committed several atrocities and compelled him to leave his village and migrate to another village "BH" in another district. But his brother continued his visits there also. On one of his visits Police learnt about it and a Police-Officer, along with his force, reached the village for spot enquiry. He found the information correct, and losing his temper, he ordered his men to set fire to the house and when it was reduced to ashes he left the village. Case no. 6 was out of station at that time. When he returned he found his family in tears and the house in ashes. It embittered him so much that he lost his balance and turned an outlaw at the age of seventy.

Many persons turn hostile and outlaws due to faulty investigation of the investigating officers. Thus "X" the investigating officer of Police Station Seendha listed the name of case no. 1 as a suspect in the stolen mouser of "BH" of village "B", on the information of "K", who had a dispute over a piece of land with case No. 1 which fact was known to the police officer. It is difficult to deny that case no. 1 turned hostile because he was dishonestly implicated in the case of stolen mouser.

Faulty actions of the Police officers may also lead to
abseeding. For example alleged that a certain police officer, often accepting a huge bribe in the form of gold ornaments at the marriage of his daughter, implicated an ex-criminal in a certain murder committed by the person who had bribed him. To avoid harassment, the ex-criminal turned a dacoit.

The Police tries hard to turn a casual dacoit into a Police-informer to finish up a particular gang. For instance, case no. 8 fell in love with a dacoit "X". She remained with the gang for six months. When she returned a Police Station Officer "Y" and a Circle Inspector "Z" tried their level best to make her a police-informer. She told about it to "X", who called her back into the gang. In an encounter, she was caught by the police and was released on bail. It is alleged that she was so cruelly harassed by them that ultimately she decided to join the gang. Later on, she developed into a very cruel criminal.

Sometimes, the police harassment and beating aggravates hostility, which in turn leads persons to banditti. Case no. 11 was slapped and beaten by a Station Officer "B" on the complaint made by his enemy "R" at a feast in a village "A". It shocked him because he was insulted before a large gathering. He returned home and exchanged hot words with "R". A fight broke out. He killed two sons of his enemy and absconded. In this case also the police action aggravated the circumstances. The attitude of the police favourable to some while unfavourable to some others – is also partly responsible for hostility in certain cases. It is even alleged by some that the police often kill dacoits who have surrendered or caught alive. Thus every wrong action of the police creates animosity against them and
as a reaction new dacoits spring up on the ashes of the older ones.

5. ASSAULT ON THE CHASTITY OF FEMALES:

Any assault on the chastity of a woman is treated as a dangerous offence, because of the high standard of domestic morals. Hervey (p. 14), mentions, "If a man insults another by uncomplimentary allusions to the chastity of his female relatives, such affront very likely leads to bloodshed." In India the "woman" is regarded as the focal point of prestige in the family. Rape, adultery and molestation of a woman cause a deep emotional disturbance in the family and till it is fully avenged people look down on that family. In the Lower Chambal Basin, people often kill such offenders. Bhatnagar (1961, p. 75) remarks, "The Gujars and Brahmins will not tolerate any sexual offence against their womanfolk. With them an offence committed leaves a permanent injury which can only be wiped out by seeking revenge and vendetta takes the form of murder."

Case no. 20 serves as an example. His younger sister aged sixteen was raped by "X", the son of a local Patel "Y". On getting this information he met "Y" and complained against his sons behaviour. "Y" in place of showing any sympathy to the victim further insulted him so that he decided to take revenge. He purchased a gun to kill "X" and "Y" but it was seized by the police in time. It compelled him to return to his service. After a few months he again returned home and killed "X" and "Y" and three other persons of the party of "X". He absconded and became an outlaw. He was actively supported by case no. 10.

Any assault on the chastity of a Brahmin lady is treated
as a grave offence and is heavily punished. Thus, in village Khad, a Patel "AS" was a rich landlord. A Gujar "BL" was an ordinary cultivator. The latter developed immoral relations with the wife of a Brahmin "X", who made a complaint to the Patel. The Patel tried the latter with a rape and hung him in a well and illegally acquired his land just to punish him. After this incident the latter absconded and became a dacoit.

Wife's infidelity is fully avenged and people commit murders on such unlawful relationship. Walsh (1929, p. 224) explains, "It is more usual for him to nurse his grievance until it so preys upon his mind that the very sight of his wife goads him into frenzy, and he makes a murderous attack upon her in the middle of the night when she is peacefully sleeping." Thus the gang leader "S" was entangled with "X", the wife of a Thakur "MS". "X" was distantly related to "S". "MS" learnt about the bad character of his wife and warned her of the dire consequences. In spite of the warning, she went to meet "S" in the evening on a pretext. "MS" followed her and caught her red handed in an uncompromising position. He decided to kill her. In the night he killed her with an axe. He could not abscond because of the fear of the dacoit "S". So, he went to the Police Station and reported the murder committed by him. He is under trial.

Similarly, cases of abduction and rape of ladies are avenged with killings. Bhatnagar (1961, pp. 23, 24, 76) gives a few examples of such cases.

Wife's infidelity upsets the mental balance of the husbands and they become dacoits to wreak vengeance if the enemy is stronger.
The Police Case History of a Criminal 'T' mentions, "T" a Rajput of village, became a dacoit because "BS" a Rajput had immoral relations with his wife. He developed a revengeful attitude and attacked "NR", a nephew of 'BS' with a sword. It hurt him. 'T' was arrested and was released on bail. He absconded, to wreak vengeance and become a dacoit."

Rape is regarded as something morally and socially bad and even a minor child develops a hatred towards such acts. For instance, a son of "X" of a Zamindar of Sheopur raped a young girl "Y". She committed suicide afterwards. She had only one brother, who was only ten years old at the time of the incident. When he grew to be eighteen, one day he hid himself in a bush and killed "X" with an axe. He then went through the village with the head of 'X' in his hand and declared that he had taken the revenge of his sister's rape. Thus, in the words of Walsh (1929, p. 224), "What operates upon his mind is a mixture of humiliation resulting from offended dignity and of fear of the consequences to himself of caste action rather than any ordinary feeling of jealousy."

The higher castes like the Thakurs and Brahmins never tolerate such sexual offences and they avenge it by killing persons, though, as Bhatnagar (1961, p.74) observes, "Chamaras and other lower castes may effect a compromise in matters, where sexual or matrimonial offences have been committed."

6. WANT OF JUSTICE:

Now-a-days every villager faces many difficult situations and falls a prey to the unsocial elements. In the past his interests
were secured by the indigenous panchayats which used to settle disputes honestly and amicably. Every one's interest was safe and no one, whether rich or poor, went against the decisions of the Panchayats. But, with the passage of time, these panchayats lost their status and social control due to the increasing unsocial elements and materialistic tendencies of the people. When a poor person approaches these panchayats and lodges complaints against injustices done to him, he does not find justice. He cannot approach courts of law with his meagre resources and, thus, out of sheer disgust and frustration, turns hostile. It was explained thus by a Police Officer, (Private Communication) "Law cannot take care of all these disputes because long drawn-out trials exhaust the patience of the litigants. Moreover, a legal trial is a costly affair and even when a case is decided the loser party will not abide by the decision but will like to take the law in their own hand by committing a murder and absconding. As might is frequently right in this area, the easiest course for a disgruntled man is to take to the ravines and wreak vengeance, as he pleases on his opponents."

When a quarrel takes place, people try to settle it locally and, if they fail, they do not approach courts of law but take the law in their own hands. Any quarrel is sufficient to serve as a motive for brutal murders. If a man is killed, it is quite certain that there would be another murder to avenge it. People abscond either on committing murder or in order to wreak vengeance on the enemy. Thus want of justice appears to be one of the factors encouraging dacoity.

Thus Case No. 7 and 'AH' committed cattle-lifting from the
house of a Gadaria of village "KI". The Gadaria held a panchayat in which case no. 7 was proved guilty, but "MH" got scot-free. Case no. 7 was very excitable. After an exchange of hot words, he beat "MH" and the Panchas, because of their one-sided judgement. "BH" was annoyed at this behaviour and decided to punish him. While returning home he was surrounded in a field by the party of "BH" and was cruelly beaten. He retaliated it and brought forth "A", the mightiest dacoit of the twentieth century, to punish him. About half of the village turned against him and, hence, "A" could not take any action against "BH". Case no. 7 became an active harbourer and later on a confirmed dacoit.

The dacoits and outlaws do not believe in court trial. A villager who lives in a remote corner of an isolated region has no resources to go to longer distances for honourable settlement of his quarrel but tries to fight it out by himself, because if he happens to take the shelter of the courts, he is often harassed by the lengthy procedure and high expenditure involved there in. He decides his cases on the spot then and there without going to the courts. For instance, case no. 13, who was a friend of two absconders 'JW' and 'PR', was falsely implicated in some murder cases thrice, by an enemy of his friends. He appeared before the court of law twice but absconded on the third time, just to avoid lengthy and expensive trials of the courts.

The police case history of criminal "RD" reveals, a Kachhi named "RD" encroached on the land of another Kachhi "ML" and took
illegal possession of a well and a mango tree, by paying a handsome bribe to the Patwari. When "ML" learnt about it, he lodged a complaint against "RD" with the Gram Panchayat in 1960, but could not get any justice. Out of anger and resentment, he threatened to kill "RD". His elder brother tried to console him, but all in vain. He absconded and became a dacoit.

Thus, most of the dacoits spring up from the isolated far off villages, who do not find justice in society. They do not possess means to fight out their interests in the courts and, hence, adopt the way of crime just to punish the wrong doers. In this connection, Dixit (1964, pp. 1-2) asserts, "The administration of justice these days has become so complicated, costly and time consuming that the average villager finds himself unable to cope with its demands. The result is that the aggrieved person gets impatient and begins to think of adopting the shorter course to take the law into his own hands. This leads to violence, commission of heinous offences and finally to recourse to the ravines to escape from the long arm of the law."

7. AVAILABILITY OF CRIMINAL SOCIETY:

The lower Chambal Basin has never been free from skilled robbers and dacoits. In this part of the country, when a person gets annoyed with the existing circumstances, he does not like to adjust himself with these, but develops a sort of revengeful spirit. He takes law into his own hands and absconds and joins the society of outlaws, which is readily available if one shows his inclination to join it. An Officer remarks, (Private Communication) "If this
society of the outlaws is not made readily available to one who has committed a crime, a person will think a number of times, before he takes into his head of absconding."

An absconder leads criminal life for years together without much difficulty. Sleeman (1849, p. 212) remarks in this connection, "The haunts of the Dacoits were chiefly in the ravines of the Chumbal, and the dense jungle in the Alwar, Kurowlee and Gwalior States and that they had staunch friends and protectors in the petty chiefs and landlords of the independent States, who invariably received a portion of their spoil and booty." Even now one can find harbourers of the gangs in the villages adjoining the ravine-belts and forests. It is because of this fact that a Police Officer (Private Communication), remarks, "Association with dacoits is conducive to the illicit trade of smuggling, disposal of stolen property and traffic in women for no body dare make a complaint against a man who is in the good books of dacoits."

The dacoits move freely in the ravines and jungles and get assistance from the harbourers. Case No. 19 was an active harbourer to case no. 21. The former developed intimacy with the latter and earned easy money through harbouring, but it was known to the police, Before he could be arrested, he joined the gang. He led the life of a dacoit for eight years. "AR" a Superintendent of Police, contacted him through a person and promised him to grant pardon, if the whole gang surrendered. He met the Police Officer and expressed his hopes, but the gang refused to surrender. When he came to inform about it to the Superintendent of Police, he was arrested and was sentenced to fourteen years rigorous imprisonment.
If the dacoit-gangs are liquidated newer ones crop up on the ashes of older ones, as the harbourers are always there to create trouble for their own vicious interests. For example, case no. 19, although, living a retired life, harbours the gangs. His son became a dacoit and, his whole family harbours the gangs, because of the tendency to earn easy money.

The system of police-informers is itself, at least in certain respects, as bad as that of the harbourers. The police informers have their own selfish interests.

8. THE MARTIAL TRADITION:

The seeds of dacoity, in the Lower Chambal Basin, have been laid in her old martial traditions. This region is inhabited by various Rajput clans like the Thakurs, the Sikarwars, the Chauhans, the Kachhwahas, the Pariharas, the Hadas, the Pawars, the Bhadorias and other martial clans like the Jats, who have a glorious past. These same have resisted the invasions of the Afghans, the Pathans, the Mughals and the Marathas from time to time and created a buffer zone along the Lower Chambal Basin, between the northern and southern India.

It is the land which has produced warriors of world repute. Leaving the past history of wariorship aside, hundreds of warriors from this sacred soil have sacrificed their lives to protect the motherland in recent wars.

It is a hard agony of fate that quite a few of the soldiers of this region turned into dacoits. Walsh (1929, p. 192) mentions, "Soldiers, members of labour parties, and, in small numbers, ex-criminals, returning to their homes, had tasted the sweets of a new
life of adventure, and were unwilling to settle down again to the
dull pursuits of agriculture. The sword had taken the place of the
plough in their thoughts and affections." The martial tradition has
perhaps made quite a few people more hot-headed and violent. They
flare up into killing the opponents on the slightest provocation.
They developed a tenacity for seeking revenge. This tendency is
responsible to some extent for the existing conditions.

In the event of any dispute, in stead of going to the court,
people take law into their own hands and decide matters themselves
at the point of a gun or by the edge of the sword. If a man is killed
it is certain that it would be followed by another murder by way of
revenge. Enmity is the essential cause of the whole trouble. People
abscend either after committing murder or they abscond in order to
wreak vengeance on the enemy in accordance with their old traditions.

On petty enmities blood-feud is common. Gamingo (1960, p. 75)
apply remarks, "Blood-feud was not common to the war-like Rajputs only.
It was common with men of every community even of lower classes.
It existed long before in the land and it exists till today." All
other castes have been born and brought up in this social environment,
and, hence, they have also imbibed the martial traditions of the
Rajputs. They use police influence and create party factions in the
villages. Ultimately, it results in creating dacoits.

9. THE HOME ENVIRONMENT:

Most homes of the Lower Chambal Basin are the breeding place
of criminality. A home shapes the personality of the children
preparing them to embark upon careers of crime. The children are not
taught to adjust to the new situations of life, hence, they commit serious offences on petty affairs. The facets related to the home environment affecting criminality may be discussed as under:

(a) **Background Of Poverty**

The background of poverty has a definite impact on dacoity. This study reveals that out of 32 dacoits, none belonged to the Upper Class group, only 4 belonged to the Middle Class group; and the remaining 28 to the Lower Class group. It is said that, "No rich person turned into a dacoit and it was only the poor, who turned an outlaw." This is a very correct assessment.

The cases studied point out that due to the hereditary poverty, the persons, who turned outlaws, were employed in unhappy occupations like cattle-grazing from the early childhood. Out of 32 cases studied, 19 were engaged in cattle-grazing at their tender age; 10 started their career at their premature age and only 3 did so at a matured age. On attaining youth all the 32 started some definite occupations. 25 of them started agriculture, 3 were employed in the army; 3 were employed in other public services; while 1 was a professional singer and dancer. Most of them started committing thefts and robberies from their early childhood. In their youth they revelled in their criminal activities rather than suppressing them.

The hardships of economic position, the increased necessities of the growing population, the growth of individual rights, traditional customs of occasional extravagance, the dilatory procedure of courts and some of the conditions of modern life, have tended to enhance the difficulties of people. The case of the lower social
stratum below them is even worse for whom the struggle for existence is still more severe. "Everywhere" it has been said of Ondh, Quotes Cunningham (1882, p.32), "in every hamlet, there is a residuum of half-clad starvelings, who have no cattle and no means of livelihood, save perhaps, a tiny patch of spade-tilled land, and their labour, remunerated at the rate of 4lbs of coarse grain or of three half-pence, or at most, two pence farthing per day. And even this wretched employment is not to be procurable all the year round. How, underfed and almost unclothed as they are, — they contrive to live through the cold nights of winter, which they often spend in field watching a standard marvel." Even now the people are suffering from the same destitute conditions. They are constantly under the pressure of want, misery and disease.

(b) **Illegal Family Occupations:**

The nature of family occupation exerts a very profound impact on the minds of the children. It shapes the character, attitude and mental make-up of the children. Thus study reveals that the dacoits got training in the art of crime from their childhood. 15 dacoits out of 32 were the products of the families, who were engaged in illegal occupations such as smuggling, disposal of stolen property, thefts, robberies and dacoities, and, thus, the seeds of criminality were sown in the tender age.

For instance, cases no. 6 and 7 belonged to a family of ring leaders, carry on smuggling, robberies and dacoities. Nearly all the notorious gangs of that time used to take shelter in the houses of "RS" and "SS". These two families committed all sorts of offences but no one dared report against them. Thus "RS", "JS", "NS", cases
no. 6 and 7 learnt the art of dacoity from their family occupations.

Case No. 8, a daughter of a prostitute, learnt the art of criminality from her mother's occupation. She used to pay visits to a dacoit "X" who paid her handsomely. She developed a taste for the gang-life and became a living sin on the earth by her criminal deeds.

Similarly, case no. 14 belonged to a family of professional dacoits and harbourers. He learnt the art and developed a criminal taste because of the illegal occupations of his family.

(c) Wrong Association:

This study reveals that out of 32 dacoits, 25 were associated with the gangs in some form or the other from their early childhood. They and their parents had been associated with the gangs of smugglers, robbers and dacoits. This wrong association retarded their healthy growth. Their energies were channelised into bad ways by these unsocial and unhealthy associations. They developed bad habits like cattle-lifting, smuggling, thefts, robberies and sexual offences. They had no cultural or social contacts with the outer world, as they lived in the remote and isolated part of the country. Sutherland and Cressey (1955, p. 76) observe, "When persons become criminal, they do so because of contacts with the criminal patterns and also because of isolation from anti-criminal patterns. Any person inevitably assimilates the surrounding culture unless other patterns are in conflict."

10. EMOTIONAL FACTORS:

Emotional factors, too, are responsible to a very large extent for the creation of dacoits. Emotional disturbances cause hypertension, which arise from the unhappy homes, unhappy occupations
and undesirable attitudes of society. When people are troubled, harassed, threatened or insulted, they cannot always restrain themselves. Very often they sharply react because the impulse of the moment determines their reactions, uncounteracted by any thought of their far reaching consequences.

(a) *Imitation:*

The roaming dacoits have created terror in the people but they have gained the favour of their own caste-fellows. Several families are earning easy money through harbouring, disposing of the stolen property, smuggling, theft and robbery. The growing youth are attracted by these dacoits influence in society - terror, illegal accumulation of wealth, threat to administration, hide-and-seek game and the thrilling news of their activities. It infuses greed in the new blood. A child imitates all that he sees and starts committing theft and later on extends the scope of his criminal activities.

The young boys imitate not only the anti-social activities of the dacoits but their ways of living also.

(b) *Evil Desire To Gain By Illegal Means:*

Every family associated with the dacoits desires to earn illegal money. Even the harbourers, agents, guides, police-informers and the agencies charged with law enforcement try to earn through illegal means.

(c) *Not Trained In Group Ideals:*

People of the Lower Chambal Basin have different ideals. Rebellion is regarded by them as heroic. The commission of unlawful
acts such as robberies and dacoities by such rebels are no sin. People say that it is better to commit dacoities, smuggling and similar offences rather than die of starvation. With this background the concept group ideals is something altogether different from what the civilised world understands by the term. The repression in society is found not only between the haves and the haves—not but between the higher castes and the lower castes also.

(d) **Association For Mutual Well Being:**

Many persons join the gangs for mutual well being. The family-members out of their bonds of affection join the absconded members and take to banditti. For instance, cases no. 28, 29 and 30.

11. **OTHER FACTORS:**

(a) **Famines:**

The occasional famine conditions of 1745, 1803, 1837-38, 1860-61, 1868-69, 1873-74, 1876-78 and 1900, i.e. the later part of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries and draughts pulled down the poor population into destitution. The Thakur clans and other hierarchal castes disintegrated partly due to want, misery, disease and the increased pressure on their means of subsistence. It forced them to adopt immoral means to earn their livelihood, and, hence, the evil of dacoity and thugi appeared on the surface.

(b) **Extradition of Fugitive Criminals:**

The system of "Extradition of Fugitive Criminals", during the Princely states time, promoted dacoity to a large extent. A dacoit was treated as a noble citizen in one state and an outlaw in another. When he was caught for a certain offence he was sent
to another State for verification, but no evidence could be collected because of the attitudes of the other States. Moreover Bhatnagar (1964, p. 75) remarks, "The then existing laws required offenders to be extradited and extradition proceedings were cumbersome and invariably took a long time." Other States did not like their natives to be handed over to the Gwalior State. Thus plundering became a profession on the border areas. It was the regular practice of the dacoits to change their residence from one state to another after committing dacoity as "the Chambal river was the boundary of Gwalior and Dholpur States and the British territory of Agra, Etawah districts in Uttar Pradesh." The Dholpur "Bar Gujar" gangs used to cross the Chambal through Sikarwari and committed dacoities in Jora circle, Bag Chini circle and Morena circle and returned to their state safely by morning. It was difficult to round them up and dacoity continued to flourish in the land of the Chambal ravines.

(c) The Merger Princely States and Abolition of Zamindary:

Scindhias conferred Zamindary on the strong influential persons of the Chambal Valley at some strategic positions like Palpur, Raghunathpur, Panchon-Ki-Jagir, Hosairpur, Khera, Chinnodi, Kodhera, Pahargarh and the like. These Zamindars help the Scindhias in administering this territory. The merger of princely states into part B States was an important landmark. With the abolition of Zamindary, the influential zamindars did not cooperate to round up the dacoits or to curb their criminal tendencies, and it was not expected too from them. But unfortunately some of the Zamindars actively cooperated with the dacoits as a revenge against the
abolition of zamindary. Report of the Bhind Morona Crime Situation Enquiry Committee 1953 (Unpublished) mentions, "They did not see any compensating advantage flowing from the change, and have not been able to reconcile themselves readily to the change in land tenure. Moreover, even though the large body of petty landholders had little to lose by the abolition of proprietary interests in land, emotionally they felt themselves aligned with the big landholder who has had much to lose and who often governs their opinions."

(d) Land Reforms:

The land reforms also affected adversely. The land of Thakurs was transferred to the landless labourers, who used to do their 'wagefree service' (Bigar). Bhattacharya (1964, Appendix p. 4), "The most sweeping changes came as a result of abolition of the bigar system in the constitution followed by the abolition of the Zamindaris and Jagirdari systems in Madhya Bharat in 1952." The Zamindars and big landholders, who were mostly Thakurs or Brahmins could not manage their increased expenditure due to the increasing population and decreasing earning opportunities, and supported the dacoits. Thus maladjustments of these upper classes helped in increasing the dacoity trend.

(e) Smuggling:

The local people used to smuggle food grains and other articles of daily use from Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan during the days of Princely States. Bhattacharya (1964, p. 75) mentions, "There were a lot of restrictions over export and import of grains, pulses and other articles. Smuggling such articles was quite profitable."
It provided them with some occupational opportunities besides their land. But the newly created state enforce restrictions on the movements of grains and other articles. It annoyed them.

(f) Elections:

The elections brought new changes in the minds of every villager. So far they were oppressed and exploited by the Thakurs and Brahmans but now every caste showed its own importance as a reaction to the hierarchical castes. The lower and middle castes refused to cast their votes in favour of the Thakurs and they contested the election of the Gram Panchayats. During the election period the villages were divided into two hostile groups. As a result dacoits and harbourers were brought to limelight. The problem of dacoity became more complicated. These elections created great rifts between communities. Different communities sought help from the gangs of their respective castes and all such villages provided good opportunities to the existing gangs. Such villages became the scene of plunder, dacoities, murders and kidnappings for ransom.

Thus, the above mentioned factors tended people to the way of crime.